



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
1000 NAVY PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

SECNAVINST 1301.7A  
DUSN  
1 May 2019

SECNAV INSTRUCTION 1301.7A

From: Secretary of the Navy

Subj: DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY FOREIGN AREA OFFICER PROGRAMS

Ref: (a) DoD Directive 1315.17 of 28 April 2005  
(b) DoD Instruction 1315.20 of 28 September 2007  
(c) DoD Instruction 5160.70 of 30 December 2016  
(d) DoD Directive 5160.41E of 21 August 2015

Encl: (1) Responsibilities

1. Purpose

a. To establish policy governing Department of the Navy (DON) Foreign Area Officer (FAO) programs and implement Department of Defense (DoD) references (a) through (d).

2. Cancellation. SECNAVINST 1301.7.

3. Applicability. This instruction applies to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), and all U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps installations, commands, activities, field offices, and all other organizational entities within the DON (collectively referred to in this instruction as "DON components").

4. Policy

a. To achieve national security objectives and continued success in current and future operations, the DON must be prepared to conduct and support military operations with an expanding number of coalition partners in a diverse set of geopolitical conditions around the world. Success in these operations, and on the asymmetric battlefields of the future, requires specialized officers with a sophisticated understanding of the international security environment. Navy and USMC FAOs maintain professional military skills and understanding of Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) at high levels

of proficiency. FAOs provide these critical war fighting capabilities to influence plans and operations, build and strengthen international partnerships, and serve as key enablers for joint, maritime, and expeditionary forces.

b. The Navy and USMC will develop, resource and sustain FAO programs designed to access, train, motivate, promote, and retain communities of highly qualified LREC professionals to support the DoD global mission and to meet the operational and human resourcing commitments of the DON. The DON will ensure that sufficient resources (funding, personnel, etc.) are allocated to comply with this instruction.

c. When available, FAOs will be the primary nominees from within the DON to serve in Joint, Interagency, and Service assignments that involve significant interaction with foreign governments and their militaries, foreign nationals, foreign entities, or international organizations. FAOs can expect to:

(1) Serve in a wide range of assignments on Joint, Interagency, and Service Staffs, Combatant Command Staffs, Defense Agencies, other DoD Component Staffs, combined headquarters or standing Joint Task Forces, and at DoD regional centers for security studies and other partner nation capacity building programs;

(2) Provide regional expertise from the political-military and strategic perspectives for planning and executing operations;

(3) Observe and report on international military issues;

(4) Serve in liaison, attaché, military-diplomat, and representational roles to other nations; and

(5) Oversee security assistance and security cooperation.

d. FAOs will be competitively selected from within the Navy and USMC. Candidates must be fully qualified in a designator or primary military occupational specialty and be pre-screened by the Services to ensure competitiveness on future promotion boards and milestone screening. Due to the critical importance of interpersonal skills associated with FAO assignments, the

Services are encouraged to employ interviews as part of pre-screening for FAO selection, as resources permit.

e. Training milestones (paragraphs 4.f.(1) through (4), below) are critical to the development and certification of a corps of credible FAO professionals. Waivers or departure from the prescribed training pipeline will thus be granted by exception on a case-by-case basis. As such, pre-screening of perspective FAOs will include an estimate of the ability of candidates (within FAO Community timelines) to meet the significant training requirements necessary to become fully qualified FAOs (awarding of an Additional Qualification Designator (AQD), or a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)), while remaining competitive with their peers.

f. FAOs will be qualified according to the following standards:

(1) FAOs must complete a graduate-level degree program at an accredited institution, focused on, but not limited to the historical, political, military or security, cultural, sociological, economic, scientific or technical, and geographic factors of specific foreign countries and regions. Officers completing a qualified course of instruction at a foreign war college will be deemed to have met the requirement for the regionally focused Master's Degree, even if the institution does not award a Master's Degree upon graduation. Officers who have an equivalent level of regional expertise may apply for a constructive credit waiver of this requirement. Approval authority rests with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASN (M&RA)).

(2) In-theater duty experience of not less than six months (preferably one year) in the country or region of specialty, involving significant interaction with host-nation nationals or entities. Duty experience will be included in the requirements of awarding of a FAO AQD or MOS. FAOs who have completed equivalent duty experience prior to designation as a FAO may apply for a constructive credit waiver from CNO or CMC, as appropriate, to satisfy this requirement. Decision authority for in-theater duty experience constructive credit waivers will be delegated no lower than the one-star Flag Officer/General Officer/SES within the Services. Marine Corps Experience-track FAOs, by virtue of their

previous duty experience are considered to have already satisfied this requirement.

(3) DON FAOs are a critical component of the DoD corps of language professionals. Foreign language skills will be developed in one or more of the predominant languages in a FAO's region of specialization. The DON goal is to attain and maintain FAO language proficiency at the professional level, measured by Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) standard level 3 in listening, reading, and speaking modalities. FAOs must achieve an ILR standard of two in two of three modalities to attain initial qualification. FAOs must then certify their language proficiency annually through the Defense Language Proficiency Test and Oral Proficiency Interviews, unless they achieve an ILR standard of at least three in two of three modalities, in which case language proficiency is certified for two years. The Services will ensure that adequate funding exists to provide continuous LREC sustainment, maintenance, and improvement training to FAOs throughout their careers.

(4) FAOs will complete a FAO Orientation Course as part of their initial training following accession. New accessions into the FAO community shall endeavor to attend the course as soon as possible following selection for lateral transfer, but no later than the commencement of their first FAO assignment. FAOs will also complete an advanced FAO education course at least every four years starting as a senior O-4. Services will ensure that funding exists to support this requirement.

g. FAOs are worldwide assignable and must maintain eligibility for a Top Secret Sensitive Compartmentalized Information security clearance and an up-to-date medical screening for overseas assignments. Services will ensure that adequate funding and resources are available to maintain eligibility for current FAOs and their families to complete the required background investigations and medical screening.

h. FAOs will be educated, trained, and have their careers managed to ensure competitive career advancement and opportunities for service at the General/Flag Officer (GO/FO) rank. To provide community expertise and leadership, the Services will screen GO/FO billets to identify those billets that could be appropriate for possible coding and assignment of FAOs, or senior leaders with FAO-relevant skills.

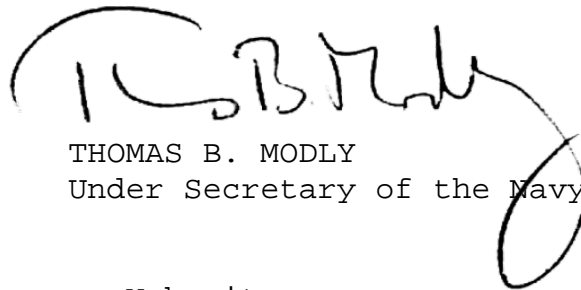
5. Responsibilities. Enclosure (1).

6. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned according to the records disposition schedules found on the Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page:

<https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact your local Records Manager or the DRMD program office.



THOMAS B. MODLY  
Under Secretary of the Navy

Distribution:

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**RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. SECNAV. Responsible for building and maintaining DON FAO programs to meet the needs of the DoD, consistent with the authorities outlined in references (a) and (b), including, but not limited to approving the precepts and criteria used by the annual statutory boards to select FAOs for promotion.
2. Under Secretary of the Navy (UNSECNAV). Responsible for the oversight, management, readiness, and compliance of FAO management programs.
3. The Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy. Designated as the Senior Official in the DON for FAO programs.
  - a. Advise the UNSECNAV on the management of DON FAO programs.
  - b. Ensure FAO policies and programs result in the accession, training, utilization, and retention of FAOs to support DoD-wide missions.
  - c. Provide any reporting as requested by DoD.
4. ASN (M&RA). Serve as the adjudication authority for constructive credit for graduate degree programs.
5. CNO and CMC
  - a. Perform the day-to-day management and administration of FAO Programs for their respective services.
  - b. Issue specific directives for the management of FAO programs.
  - c. Serve as the adjudication authority for constructive credit for in-theater duty experience for their respective services. This authority may not be delegated below the 1-star Flag Officer/General Officer/Senior Executive Service level.
  - d. Ensure a process is established for identifying and tracking FAOs to be contacted for voluntary service to support DoD missions after separation following completion of their mandatory service obligation or immediately upon retirement.